

Amendments to the Claims:

1-34. (Cancelled)

35. (Previously Presented) An HIV immunogenic composition characterized in that it comprises at least one isolated Tat antigen which is a stabilized Tat antigen resistant to proteolytic degradation, said stabilized antigen being selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a complex Tat/ligand comprising at least an HIV Tat protein or a Tat fragment of at least 11 amino acids capable of inducing an anti-Tat specific humoral and/or cellular immune response in humans, and a non-metal ligand of Tat,
- b) an artificial variant of an HIV Tat protein or of a Tat fragment of at least 11 amino acids capable of inducing an anti-Tat specific humoral and/or cellular immune response in humans, wherein ~~one to the~~ seven cysteines located at positions 22, 25, 27, 30, 31, 34 and ~~or~~ 37 of the Tat amino acid sequence are modified with ~~the~~ a hydrophobic group S-tert-butyl and/or substituted with a hydrophobic amino acid chosen from: Leucine, Isoleucine, ~~Methionine~~, Phenylalanine, Tryptophan ~~and~~, Tyrosine ~~and the hydrophobic analogs of said amino acids~~,
- c) an artificial variant of an HIV Tat protein or of a Tat fragment of at least 11 amino acids capable of inducing an anti-Tat specific humoral and/or cellular immune response in humans, wherein the cysteines located at positions 22, 34 and 37 of the Tat amino acid sequence are substituted with a serine and the cysteines located at positions 25, 27, 30 and 31 of said sequence are modified with the hydrophobic group S-tert-butyl,
and
 - d) a complex between the artificial variant of a Tat protein or of a Tat fragment defined in b)or c), and a non-metal ligand of Tat.

36. (Currently Amended) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that said non-metal ligand in a) or in de) is protein, lipid, carbohydrate, nucleotide, glycolipid or glycoprotein.

37. (Currently Amended) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 36, characterized in that said non-metal ligand in a) or in de) is a polysulfated sugar chosen from: dextran sulfate, pentosan polysulfate and polysulfated glycosaminoglycans, including heparin or heparan sulfate.

38. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 37, characterized in that said heparin is a heparin having a molecular weight of 15000 Da or a heparin fragment having a molecular weight of 6000 Da.

39. – 41. (Cancelled)

42. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that said stabilized Tat antigen derives from an inactivated Tat protein or from an inactivated Tat fragment.

43. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 42, characterized in that said inactivated Tat protein or said inactivated Tat fragment comprises the substitution of each of the cysteines at positions 22, 34 and 37 to serines or else the substitution of each of the arginines at positions 52 and 53 to glutamines.

44. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that said Tat protein or the fragment of said protein is chosen from: the Tat protein of 101 amino acids, the Tat protein of 86 amino acids, the fragment 1 to 57 of Tat and the fragments of at least 11 amino acids capable of inducing an anti-

Tat specific humoral and/or cellular immune response in humans, which are included in said Tat proteins of 101 or 86 amino acids or said fragment 1 to 57 of Tat.

45. (Currently Amended) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that said HIV Tat protein in a), or b) or c) comprises the sequence SEQ ID NO: 1.

46. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that said Tat protein or said Tat fragment in a) is also complexed with a metal ion.

47. (Currently Amended) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that said artificial variant of a Tat protein or of a Tat fragment in b), c) or in d) is also complexed with a metal ion.

48. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that said Tat protein or said Tat fragment is a monomer.

49. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that said Tat protein or said Tat fragment is an oligomer.

50. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 49, characterized in that said oligomer is formed from the covalent association of said Tat protein and/or of the fragment of said protein by means of an intermolecular disulfide bond involving one of the cysteines at position 22, 25, 27, 30, 31, 34 or 37.

51. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 50, characterized in that said disulfide bond involves one of the cysteines at position 22, 34 or 37.

52. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 51, characterized in that the Tat dimer is formed from the association, by means of a disulfide bridge between the cysteines at position 34, of two Tat proteins or of two Tat fragments of at least 11 amino acids capable of inducing an anti-Tat specific humoral and/or cellular immune response in humans, which comprise a serine at positions 22 and 37 and a leucine at positions 25, 27, 30 and 31.

53. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 49, characterized in that said oligomer is formed from the noncovalent association of said Tat protein and/or of the fragment of said protein by means of metal ions.

54. (Cancelled).

55. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that it comprises a pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle and/or an adjuvant and/or a carrier substance.

56. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 55, characterized in that it consists of said stabilized antigen and a pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle and/or a carrier substance.

57. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 55, characterized in that said adjuvant is alumina hydroxide.

58. - 66. (Cancelled).

67. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 46, characterized in that said metal ion is a polyvalent cation.

68. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 46, characterized in that said metal ion is a divalent cation.

69. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 46, characterized in that said metal ion is Zn^{2+} or Cd^{2+} .

70. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 47, characterized in that said metal ion is a polyvalent cation.

71. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 47, characterized in that said metal ion is a divalent cation.

72. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 47, characterized in that said metal ion is Zn^{2+} or Cd^{2+} .

73. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 49, characterized in that said oligomer is a dimer.

74. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 50, characterized in that said oligomer is a dimer.

75. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 53, characterized in that said oligomer is a dimer.

76. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 53, characterized in that said metal ions are polyvalent cations.

77. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 53, characterized in that said metal ions are divalent cations.

78. (Previously Presented) The immunogenic composition as claimed in claim 53, characterized in that said metal ions are Zn²⁺ or Cd²⁺ ions.

79. (Cancelled)